A PRECIOUS

And most Divine

LETTER

FROM THAT

FAMOUS,

AND

Ever to be renowned Earl of ESSEX,

(Father to the now Lord Generall his Excellence) to the Earl of SOUTH-HAMPTON, in the latter time of Queen ELIZABETHS Reigne.

Printed according to Order.

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Devereux (R)

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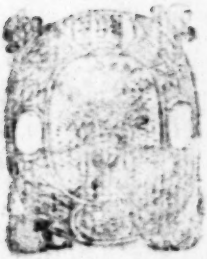
LADY BANKS



To the READER.

THis Letter, many Yeares ſince received from the hands of a moſt Honourable Perſon, eminent in the Court in thoſe Elizean dayes, (when Honour crowned Virtue, and Virtue was the glory of the Times) I have long ſtored up for my owne private, as a Gem and Treaſure ineſtimable.

Earthly Treaſures waſte, but Heavenly increaſe by Communication! Beſides, I feare (with the Lepers of Old) I doe not well long to conceale, what all that read will judge to be a Common Treaſure. What the Author was for Heigth and Greatneſſe all know; What for Grace and Goodneſſe (though Envy or Ignorance, have as it were Conſpired to Vaile ever his Orient Luſtre) thou mayeſt take ſome ſcantling of by this.

His Magnanimity and Valour the World knew, as farre as Hercules his Pillars, and the utmoſt Extent of the Heſperian Pride. His Humility and Plaine-heartednes (which heightned Him above all his Honours) thoſe that knew him were not ignorant of.

That Noble Heroe yet lives in the true Succeſſor of Honour and Virtue, our Noble GENERALL.

(Neque degeneres pariunt
Aquilæ Columbas.)

His incorrupted Fidelity, Valour, and Wiſedome, are above the reach of Ignorant or Envious Malignants.

His immovable Reſolution (ever, and of late expreſt) to deny his Honour, his owne Wiſedome, yea his life for the Common Safety, ſhines ſo bright in the Eyes of all Judicious, that neither

ther the malicious fomentings of Malignant Spirits, nor the weake Clamors of impatient Ignorance, nor the Necessity of Gods most holy Providence, (exercising his Excellency and the Kingdome, I hope for good) I say that none, nor all of these, can justly cloud and Eclipse his Shine and Lustre.

There is nothing within the Circumference of Politicall and prudentiall Arts, that hath more uncertaine and various Events then that of warre: Eventus Belli incertus.

The protracting lengthning, shortning, lies in the hand of a higher Excellency, even onely his, in whose hand is our Way and Breath, as Daniel *told* Belshazzar.

The Greatest and best Commanders that ever the world yet saw, must remember, in whose hand is their Way and Breath, and both they and all Men must with Patience see (for oft it comes to passe) both Moneths, and Summers spend beyond their Thoughts, Desires, Endeavours, and yet no Blemish to their Wisdome, Valour, Fidelity, or Vigilancy.

He that is the God of Peace mercifully shew us the Paths of it, even of that Peace, which no Man can give nor take from us.

BRITISH MUSEUM

A Letter

A LETTER FROM

That famous, and ever to be renowned Earle of Essex, to the Earl of *south-hampton*, in the latter time of Queen Elizabeths Reigne.

My Lord,

S neither nature nor custome ever made me a man of complement, to now I shall have lesse will than ever for to use such Ceremonies, when I have left with *Martha* to be *solicitum circa multa*, and believe with *Mary*, *unum sufficit*: but it is no complement or Ceremony, but a reall and necessary duty that one friend oweth to another in absence & especially at their leave taking, when in mans reason many accidents may keep them long divided, or perhaps barre them ever meeting till they meet in another world; for then shall I thinke that my friend, whose honour, whose Person, and whose fortune is deare unto me, shall prosper and be happy where ever he goes, and what ever he takes in hand, when he is in the favour of that God, under whose protection there is onely safety, and in whose service there is onely true happinesse to be found. What I thinke of your naturall gifts or abilities in this age, or in this State, to give glory to God, and to winne honour to your selfe, if you imploy the Talents you have received to their best use, I will not now tell you. it sufficeth, that when I was farthest of all times from dissembling, I spake truly, and have witnes enough: but these things only I will put your Lordships in mind of.

Firſt, that you have nothing that you have not received.

Secondly, that you poſſeſſe them not as Lord over them, but as an accomptant for them.

Thirdly, If you imploy them to ſerve this world, or your own worldly delights, (which the Prince of this world will ſeek to entertain you with) it is ingratitude, it is injuſtice, yea it is perfidious treacherie. For what would you thinke of ſuch a ſervant of yours, that ſhould convert your goods committed to his charge, to the advantage or ſervice of your greateſt enemy; & what do you leſſe than this with God, ſince you have all from him, and know that the world, and Prince thereof, are at a continuall enmity with him? and therefore if ever the admonition of your trueſt friend ſhall be heard by you; or if your Countrey which you may ſerve in ſo great and many things, be deare unto you; If your God, whom you muſt (if you deale truly with your ſelfe) acknowledge to be powerfull over all, and juſt in all be feared by you; yea if you be dear unto your ſelfe and preferre an everlaſting happines before a pleaſant dreame, which you muſt ſhortly awake out of, and then repent in the bitternes of your ſoul; if any of theſe things be regarded by you, then I ſay, call your ſelfe to account for what is paſt, cancell all the leagues you have made without the warrant of a religious conſcience, make a reſolute Covenant with your God, to ſerve him with all your natural and ſpirituall, inward and outward gifts and abilities, and then he that is faithfull (and cannot lie) hath promiſed to honour them that honour him; He will give you that inward peace of Soul, and true joy of heart, which till you have you ſhall never reſt, and which when you have, you ſhall never be ſhaken, and which you can never attaine to any other way than this that I have ſhewed you.

I know your Lordſhip may ſay to your ſelfe, and object to me, this is but a vapor of melancholie and the ſtile of a Priſoner, and that I was far enough from it, when I lived in the world as you doe now, and may be ſo again when my fetters be taken from me. I anſwer, though your Lordſhip ſhould thinke ſo, yet cannot I diſtruſt the goodneſſe of my God that his mercy will fail me or his grace forſake me: I have ſo deeply ingaged my ſelfe, that I ſhould be one of the moſt miſerable Apoſtates that ever was, I have ſo avowed my profeſsion and called ſo many from time to time to witnes it, and to be watchmen over me, that I ſhould be the holloweſt hypocrite that ever was borne: But though I ſhould periſh in my owne ſin, and draw upon my ſelfe my own damnation, ſhould not you take hold of the grace and mercy in God which is offered unto you, and make your profit of my fearful and wretched example?

I was

I was longer a ſlave and ſervant to the world and the corruptions of it, then you have bin, and therefore could hardlyer be drawn from it. I had many calls, and anſwered ſome of them ſlowly, thinking a ſoft pace faſt enough to come to Chriſt and my ſelfe forward enough when I ſaw the end of my journy, though I arrived not at it, and therefore I have been by Gods providence violently pul'd, hal'd, and drag'd to the Marriage Feaſt, as the world hath ſeen. It was juſt with God to afflict me in this world that he might give me joy in another. I had too much knowledge when I performed too little obedience, and was therefore to be beaten with double ſtripes: God grant your Lordſhip may feel the comfort I now enjoy in my unfaigned converſion, but that you never feele the torments I have ſuffered for my too long delaying it; I had none but Divines to call upon me, to whom I ſaid, if my ambition could have entred into their narrow hearts, they would not have bin ſo humble; or if my delights had bin taſted by them, they could not have been ſo preciſe: but your Lordſhip hath one to call upon you, that knowes what it is you now injoy, & what the greateſt fruit and end is of all the contentments that this world can afford. Thinke therefore deare Earl, that I have ſtaked & bounded all the waies of pleaſure to you & left them as ſea markes for you to keep the Channell of religious virtue; for, ſhut your eyes never ſo long they muſt be open at laſt, and then you muſt ly with me, there is no peace to the wicked. I will make a Covenant with my Soul, not to ſuffer my eyes to ſleep in the night, nor my thoughts to attend the firſt buſines of the day, till I have prayed to my God, that your Lordſhip may believe and make profit of this plaine, but faithfull admonition; and then I know your Countrey and friends ſhall be happy in you, and Your ſelf ſucceſſefull in all you take in hand; which ſhall be an unſpeakeable comfort to

Your Lordſhips Couſin and
true friend, whom no world-
ly cauſe can divide
from you
ESSEX.

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